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DEPARTMENT OF STATE WASHINGTON
February 10, 1970

S/S - 2130
MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: South Asia Military Supply Policy

As I see it, we have three basic choices in reaching a decision on the South Asian military supply question. We can: (1) retain the embargo on United States arms sales to India and Pakistan; (2) lift the embargo and permit sales to both countries; or (3) make one-time exceptions or modifications of policy in favor of Pakistan. These choices are fully set forth and analyzed in the paper entitled "U.S. Military Supply Policy for South Asia" (NSCIG/NEA 69-39).

You will recall that before your Asian trip last July the Secretary gave you his tentative view that "having gotten out of the arms business in South Asia, we would do well to stay out". Since your Asian trip, there have been several developments which relate directly or indirectly to the arms supply issue, including India's flirtation on the Hanoi recognition issue and the revival of the Turk-Pakistan tank proposal (Enclosure 1).

Recommendation:

I do not believe that any of the recent developments materially change the situation. If anything, we are more convinced than before that we should retain the embargo on United States sales of lethal weapons to India and Pakistan -- for the following reasons:

- We do not have overriding political or security interests in South Asia which require us to get back into the arms business. Our relations with both India and Pakistan are generally good, despite the recent Indian flirtations with Hanoi and the disappearance of our former "special relationship" with Pakistan and our intelligence facilities in that country. The Indian military force, rebuilt after the 1962 Chinese incursion, seems capable of withstanding any potential Chinese attack and the prospects of Indo-Pakistan hostilities seem remote at present.
- India is relatively more important to our interests than Pakistan. India will react sharply to any United States policy change. If we can please only one of the two countries, we should lean toward India, the larger and more influential power.
- Pakistan's unhappiness will be containable. It will continue to maintain good relations with us as a political offset to its relations with the USSR and Communist China and because we are Pakistan's largest aid donor (\$100 million in United States economic aid to Pakistan for FY 1969 vs. \$200 million for India -- although India has a 4 to 1 population advantage.)
- Even if we were ready to resume arms sales on a large scale basis -- which is unlikely in any event -- we could not significantly affect the policies of India and Pakistan. These policies are set by geopolitical factors and matters of basic national interest which could not be significantly influenced by our arms policy.
- At present neither the USSR nor Communist China seems likely to make major additional political inroads in South Asia via the military supply route. Both India and Pakistan can be counted upon to follow essentially non-aligned foreign policies and their military establishments will not succumb to Communist influence. However, we will wish to watch the effect of our arms policy on Soviet and Chinese influence in Pakistan as Pakistan evolves toward new political institutions.
- There are some members of Congress who believe we should not remain out of the South Asian arms picture but a more vocal and influential group, especially in the Senate, would criticize United States reinvolvement in South Asian military supply. We obviously should change the policy despite anticipated Congressional criticism if our political and security interests dictate. However, as previously noted, our interests do not require a change of policy in this instance.

If you agree to uphold the present embargo, I think we should convey the word to India and Pakistan in terms of a decision to keep the military supply question under continuing review. Such a formula might be slightly better from the Pakistan viewpoint and, by keeping the issue somewhat open, might give us certain political advantages in future dealings with India.

While recommending that we maintain the status quo, I realize that you may feel some obligation to President Yahya. This might take the form of providing some military equipment or some economic development related help of particular value to Pakistan. The pros and cons of various alternatives are enclosed (Enclosure 2).

If you consider military equipment is required, we would hope that you would make a gesture toward Pakistan which would not depart markedly from our present policy. Our first preference would be to make a one-time exception to present policy and agree to sell Pakistan about six F-104 fighter aircraft which Pakistan has asked to buy from us. We continue to believe that we should not approve the proposed Turk-Pakistan tank transaction for the reasons set forth in the Secretary's December 18 memorandum to you (Enclosure 3).

If despite the foregoing considerations you feel disposed to change the policy to permit sales to India and Pakistan, or to make a major military gesture toward Pakistan, the Secretary would appreciate an opportunity to talk further with you after he returns from Africa.

Acting Secretary

Enclosures:

1. Recent Developments Affecting South Asia Military Supply Policy Issue

2. Possible Gestures Toward Pakistan
3. Memorandum dated December 18, 1969

Clearance:
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